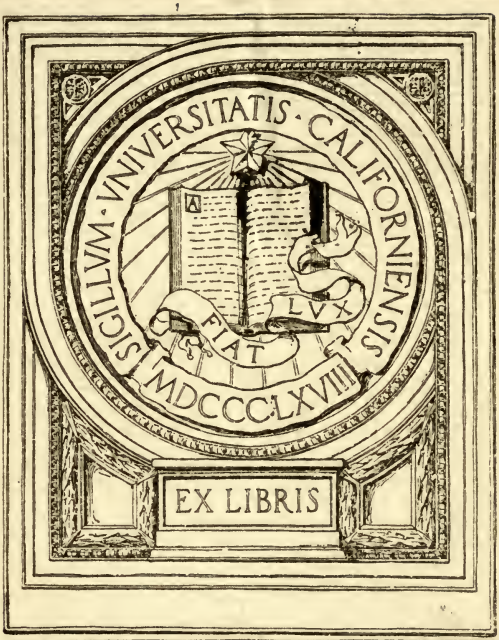
Tobogganing on Parnassus

Franklin P. Adams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TOBOGGANING ON PARNASSUS

TOBOGGANING ON PARNASSUS

By

FRANKLIN P. ADAMS

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
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1913

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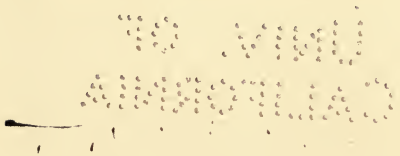

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TO

BERT LESTON TAYLOR

GUIDE, PHILOSOPHER,
BUT FRIEND

257307

If that these vagrant verses make
One heart more glad; if they but bring
A single smile, for that One's sake
I should be satisfied to sing.
As Locker said, in phrasing fitter,
Pleased if but One should like the twitter.

If I have eased one heart of pain;
If I have made one throb or thrill;
My labour has not been in vain.
My work has not been all for nil,
If only One, from Maine to Kansas,
Shall say "I like his simple stanzas."

If but a solitary voice
Should say "These verses polyglot
Are not so bad," I should rejoice;
But oh, my publishers would not!
* * * * *
And I, though shy and unanointed,
Should be a little disappointed.

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TOBOGGANING ON PARNASSUS

TOBOGGANING ON PARNASSUS

Us Poets

Wordsworth wrote some tawdry stuff;
  Much of Moore I have forgotten;
Parts of Tennyson are guff;
  Bits of Byron, too, are rotten.

All of Browning isn't great;
  There are slipshod lines in Shelley;
Every one knows Homer's fate;
  Some of Keats is vermicelli.

Sometimes Shakespeare hit the slide,
  Not to mention Pope or Milton;
Some of Southey's stuff is snide.
  Some of Spenser's simply Stilton.

When one has to boil the pot,
  One can't always watch the kittle.
You may credit it or not —
  Now and then *I* slump a little!

Rubber-Stamp Humour

If couples mated but for love;
If women all were perfect cooks;
If Hoosier authors wrote no books;
If horses always won;
If people in the flat above
Were silent as the very grave;
If foreign counts were prone to save;
If tailors did not dun —

If automobiles always ran
As advertised in catalogues;
If tramps were not afraid of dogs;
If servants never left;
If comic songs would always scan;
If Alfred Austin were sublime;
If poetry would always rhyme;
If authors all were deft —

If office boys were not all cranks
On base-ball; if the selling price
Of meat and coal and eggs and ice
Would stop its mad increase;
If women started saying "Thanks"
When men gave up their seats in cars;
If there were none but good cigars,
And better yet police —

Rubber-Stamp Humour

If there were no such thing as booze;
If wifey's mother never came
To visit; if a foot-ball game
Were mild and harmless sport;
If all the Presidential news
Were colourless; if there were men
At every mountain, sea-side, glen,
River and lake resort —

If every girl were fair of face;
If women did not fear to get
Their suits for so-called bathing wet —
If all these things were true,
This earth would be a pleasant place.
But where would people get their laughs?
And whence would spring the paragraphs?
And what would jokers do?

The Simple Stuff

AD PUERUM

Horace: Book I, Ode 32.

"Persicos odi, puer, apparatus."

Nix on the Persian pretence!
  Myrtle for Quintus H. Flaccus!
Wreaths of the linden tree, hence!
Nix on the Persian pretence!
Waiter, here's seventy cents —
  Come, let me celebrate Bacchus!
Nix on the Persian pretence!
  Myrtle for Quintus H. Flaccus.

"Carpe Diem," or Cop the Day

AD LEUCONOEN

Horace: Book I, Ode 13.

"Tu ne quæsieris, scire nefas —"

It is not right for you to know, so do not ask, Leuconoë,
How long a life the gods may give or ever we are gone away;
Try not to read the Final Page, the ending colophonian,
Trust not the gypsy's tea-leaves, nor the prophets Babylonian.
Better to have what is to come enshrouded in obscurity
Than to be certain of the sort and length of our futurity.
Why, even as I monologue on wisdom and longevity
How Time has flown! Spear some of it!
The longest life is brevity.

That for Money!

AD C. SALLUSTIUM CRISPUM

Horace: Book II, Ode 2

"Nellus argento color est avaris."

Sallust, I know you of old,
How you hate the sight of gold —
"Idle ingots that encumber
Mother Earth" — I've got your number.

Why is Proculeius known
From Elmira to Malone?
For his money? Don't upset me!
For his love of folks — you get me?

Choke the Rockefeller yen
For the clink of iron men!
Happiness it will not mint us,
Take it from your Uncle Quintus.

Fancy food and wealthy drink
Raise Gehenna with a gink;
Pastry, terrapin, and cheeses
Bring on gout and swell diseases.

That for Money!

Phraätes upon the throne
Old King Cyrus used to own
Fails to hoodwink or deceive me,
Cyrus was some king, believe me!

Get me right: a man's-size prince
Knows that money is a quince.
When they see the Yellow Taffy,
Reg'lar Princes don't go daffy.

Xanthias Jollied

AD XANTHIAM PHOCEUM

Horace: Book II, Ode 4.

"Ne sit ancillæ tibi amor pudori."

Nay, Xanthias, feel unashamed
That she you love is but a servant.
Remember, lovers far more famed
Were just as fervent.

Achilles loved the pretty slave
Brisëis for her fair complexion;
And to Tecmessa Ajax gave
His young affection.

Why, Agamemnon at the height
Of feasting, triumph, and anointment,
Left everything to keep, one night,
A small appointment.

And are you sure the girl you love —
This maid on whom you have your heart set
Is lowly — that she is not of
The Roman smart set?

A maiden modest as is she,
So full of sweetness and forbearance,
Must be all right; her folks must be
Delightful parents.

Xanthias Jollied

Her arms and face I can commend,
And, as the writer of a poem,
I fain would compliment, old friend,
The limbs below 'em.

Nay, be not jealous. Stop your fears.
My tendencies are far from sporty.
Besides, the number of my years
Is over forty.

Horace the Wise

AD PYRRHAM

Horace: Book I, Ode 5.

"Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa"

What lady-like youth in his wild aberrations
Is putting cologne on his brow?
For whom are the puffs and the blond trans-
formations?
I wonder who's kissing you now.*

Tee hee! I must laugh when I think of his
finish,
Not wise to your ways and your rep.
Ha! ha! how his fancy for you will diminish!
I know, for I'm Jonathan Hep.

*Paraphraser's note: Horace beat the modern song writers to this. The translation is literal enough — "Quis . . . gracilis te puer . . urget?" .

Jealousy

AD LYDIAM

Horace: Book I., Ode 13.

"Quem tu, Lydia, Telephi
Cervicem roseam, cerea Telephi —"

What time thou yearnest for the arms
Of Telephus, I fain would twist 'em;
When thou dost praise his other charms
It just upsets my well-known system;
My brain is like a three-ring circus,
In short, it gets my *capra hircus*.

My reason reels, my cheeks grow pale,
My heart becomes unduly spiteful,
My verses in the *Evening Mail*
Are far from snappy and delightful.
I put a civil question, Lyddy:
Is that a way to treat one's stiddy?

What mean those marks upon thee, girl?
Those prints of brutal osculation?
Great grief! that lowlife and that churl!
That Telephus abomination!
Can him, O votary of Venus,
Else everything is off between us.

Tobogganing on Parnassus

O triply beatific those
  Whose state is classified as married,
Untroubled by the green-eyed woes,
  By such upheavals never harried.
Ay, three times happy are the wed ones,
Who cleave together till they're dead ones.

To Be Quite Frank

IN CHLORIN

Horace: Book III, Ode 15.
"Uxor pauperis Ibyci — "

Your conduct, naughty Chloris, is
Not just exactly Horace's
  Ideal of a lady
  At the shady
    Time of life;
You mustn't throw your soul away
On foolishness, like Pholoë —
  Her days are folly-laden —
  She's a maiden,
    You're a wife.

Your daughter, with propriety,
May look for male society,
  Do one thing and another
  In which mother
    Shouldn't mix;
But revels Bacchanalian
Are — or should be — quite alien
  To you a married person,
  Something worse'n
    Forty-six!

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Yes, Chloris, you cut up too much,
You love the dance and cup too much,
  Your years are quickly flitting —
  To your knitting,
    Right about!
Forget the incidental things
That keep you from parental things —
  The World, the Flesh, the Devil,
  On the level,
    Cut 'em out!

R. S. V. P.

AD PHYLLIDEM

Horace: Book IV Ode 11

"Est mihi nonum superantis annum"

Phyllis, I've a keg of fine fermented grape
juice,
Alban wine that's been nine years in the
cellar.
Ivy chaplets? Sure. Also, in the garden,
Plenty of parsley.

See my little shack — why, you'd hardly
know it.
All the rooms are swept, Sunday-like and
shiny;
Flowers all around, altar simply famished —
Hungry for lamb stew.

Neighbours all are coming over to the party,
All the busy boys, all the giggling girlies,
Whiffs of certain things wafted from the
kitchen —
Simply delicious.

Oh, of course. You ask why the fancy fireworks,
Why the awning out, why the stylish doings.
Well, I'll tell you why. It's Maecenas' birthday —
13th of April.

Telephus? Oh, tush! Pass him up completely!
Telly's such a swell; Telly doesn't love you;
Telly is a trifler; Telly's running round with
Some other fairy.

Phyllie, don't mismate; those that do regret it.
Phaëton — you know his unhappy story;
Poor Bellerophon, too, you must remember,
Pegasus shook him.

If these few remarks, rather aptly chosen,
Make a hit with you, come, don't make me jealous.
Let me sing you songs of my own composing.
Oh, come on over!

Advice

AD ARIUSTUM FUSCUM

I

Horace: Book I, Ode 22.
"Integer vitæ scelerisque purus" —

Take it from me: A guy who's square,
His chances always are the best.
I'm in the know, for I've been there,
And that's no ancient Roman jest.

What time he hits the hay to rest
There's nothing on his mind but hair,
No javelin upon his chest —
Take it from me, a guy who's square.

There's nothing that can throw a scare
Into the contents of his vest;
His name is Eva I-Don't-Care;
His chances always are the best.

Why, once, when I was way out West,
Singing to Lalage, a bear
Came up, and I was some distressed —
I'm in the know, for I've been there.

But back he went into his lair,
(Cage, corner, den, retreat, nook, nest),
And left me to "The Maiden's Prayer" —
And that's no ancient Roman jest.

In Newtonville or Cedar Crest,
In Cincinnati or Eau Claire,
I'll warble till I am a pest,
"My Lalage" — no matter where —
Take it from me!

II

Fuscus, my friend, take it from me —
I know the world and what it's made of —
One on the square has naught to be
Afraid of.

The Moorish bows and javelins? Nope.
Such deadly things need not alarm him.
Why, even arrows dipped in dope
Can't harm him!

He's safe in any clime or land,
Desert or river, hill or valley;
Safe in all places on the Rand-
McNally.

Why, one day in my Sabine grot,
I sang for Lalage to hear me;
A wolf came in and he did not
Come near me!

Advice

Ah, set me on the sunless plain,
In China, Norway, or Matanzas,
Ay, place me anywhere from Maine
To Kansas.

Still of my Lalage I'll sing,
Where'er the Fates may chance to drop me;
And nobody nor anything
Shall stop me.

When Horace "Came Back"

CARMEN AMOEBAEUM

I

Horace: Book III, Ode 9.

"*Donec gratus eram tibi —*"

HORACE

When I was your stiddy, my loveliest Lyddy,
And you my embraceable she,
In joys and diversions, the king of the Persians
Had nothing on me.

LYDIA

When I was the person you penned all that verse on,
Ere Chloë had caused you to sigh,
Not she whose cognomen is Ilia the Roman
Was happier than I.

HORACE

Ah, Chloë the Thracian —— whose sweet modulation
Of voice as she lilts to the lyre
Is sweeter and fairer? Would but the Fates spare her
I'd love to expire.

When Horace "Came Back"

LYDIA

Tush! Calais claims me and wholly inflames me,
He pesters me never with rhymes;
If they should spare Cally, I'd perish to*tal*ly
A couple of times.

HORACE

Suppose my affection in Lyddy's direction
Returned; that I gave the good-by
To Chloë the golden, and back to the olden? —
I pause for reply.

LYDIA

Cheer up, mine ensnarer! Be Calais fairer
Than stars, be you blustery and base,
I'll love you, adore you; in brief, I am for you
All over the place.

II

HORACE

What time I was your one best bet
And no one passed the wire before me,
Dear Lyddy, I cannot forget
How you would—yes, you would—adore me.
To others you would tie the can;
You thought of me with no aversion.
In those days I was happier than
A Persian.

LYDIA

Correct. As long as you were not
So nuts about this Chloë person,
Your flame for me burned pretty hot —
Mine was the door you pinned your verse on.
Your favourite name began with L,
While I thought you surpassed by no man —
Gladder than Ilia, the well-
Known Roman.

HORACE

On Chloë? Yes, I've got a case;
Her voice is such a sweet soprano;
Her people come from Northern Thrace;
You ought to hear her play piano.
If she would like my suicide —
If she'd want me a dead and dumb thing,
Me for a glass of cyanide,
Or something.

LYDIA

Now Calais, the handsome son
Of old Ornitus, has *me* going;
He says I am his honey bun,
He's mine, however winds are blowing;
I think that he is awful nice,
And, if the gods the signal gave him,
I'd just as lieve die once or twice
To save him.

When Horace "Came Back"

HORACE

Suppose I'm gone on you again,
  Suppose I've got ingrown affection
For you; I sort of wonder, then,
  If you'd have any great objection.
Suppose I pass this Chloë up
  And say: "Go roll your hoop, I'm rid o' ye!"
Would that drop sweetness in your cup?
    Eh, Lydia?

LYDIA

Why, say — though he's fair as a star,
  And you are like a cork, erratic
And light — and though I know you are
  As blustery as the Adriatic,
I think I'd rather live with you
  Or die with you, I swear to gracious.
So I will be your Mrs. Q.
    Horatius.

Nix on the Fluffy Stuff

AD CYNTHIAM

Propertius: Book I, Elegy 2.

"Quid iuvat ornato procedere, vita, capillo
Et tenues Coa veste movere sinus?"

Why, my love, the yellow trinkets
In your tresses' purer gold?
Why the Syrian perfume? Think it's
Nice to be thus aureoled?
Why the silken robes that rustle?
Why the pigment on the map?
Think you all that fume and fuss'll
Ever charm a chap?

Mother Earth is unaffected —
Is her beauty therefore less?
Is she gray or ill-complected?
I should call her some success.
Soft the murmur of the river,
Bright the shore that lines the sea —
Is the universe a flivver?
No, take it from me.

Nix on the Fluffy Stuff

Castor loved the lady Phœbe
For no bought or borrowed wile;
Hilläira — wasn't she be-
Loved without excessive style?
Hippodamia slaved no fashions —
All that braver, elder time
Is replete with simple passions
Difficult to rhyme.

Nay, my Cynthia, sweet and smile-ish,
Take it from your own Propert,
Don't essay to be so stylish,
Don't attempt the harem skirt.
I am ever Yours Sincerely,
Past the shadow of a doubt,
Yours Forever, if you'll merely
Cut the frivol out.

Catullus, Considerable Kisser

(A Pasteurization of Ode VII.)

How many kisses, Lesbia, miss, you ask would
be enough for me?
I cannot sum the total number; nay, that were
too tough for me.
The sands that o'er Cyrene's shore lie sweetly
odoriferous,
The stars that sprent the firmament when
overly stelliferous —
Come, Lezzy, please add all of these, until the
whole amount of 'em
Will sorely vex the rubbernecks attempting
to keep count of 'em.

V. Catullus Explains

ODE LXXXV: AD LESBIAM

Hark thou, my Lesbia, there be none existent
Can truly say she hath been loved by me
As thou hast been. No faith is more consistent
Than that which V. Catullus gives to thee.

How reasonless the state of an emotion!
For wert thou faultless, perfect, and sublime,
I could not like thee; nor would my devotion
And love be less wert thou the Queen of Crime.

The Rich Man

The rich man has his motor-car,
  His country and his town estate.
He smokes a fifty-cent cigar
    And jeers at Fate.

He frivols through the livelong day,
  He knows not Poverty her pinch.
His lot seems light, his heart seems gay,
    He has a cinch.

Yet though my lamp burns low and dim,
  Though I must slave for livelihood —
Think you that I would change with him?
    You bet I would!

To-night

Love me to-night! Fold your dear arms around me —
Hurt me — I do but glory in your might!
Tho' your fierce strength absorb, engulf, and drown me,
Love me to-night!

The world's wild stress sounds less than our own heart-beat
Its puny nothingness sinks out of sight.
Just you and I and Love alone are left, sweet —
Love me to-night!

Love me to-night! I care not for to-morrow —
Look in my eyes, aglow with Love's own light:
Full soon enough will come daylight, and sorrow —
Love me to-night!

—Beatrice M. Barry, in the *Banquet Table.*

We can't to-night! We're overworked and busy;
We've got a lot of paragraphs to write;
Although your invitation drives us dizzy,
We can't to-night!

But, Trixie, we admit we're greatly smit with
The heart you picture — incandescent, white.
We must confess that you have made a hit with
Us here to-night.

Tobogganing on Parnassus

O Beatrice! O Tempora! O Heaven!
List to our lyre the while the strings we smite;
Where shall you be at — well, say half-past seven
To-morrow night?

Those Two Boys

When Bill was a lad he was terribly bad.
He worried his parents a lot;
He'd lie and he'd swear and pull little girls' hair;
His boyhood was naught but a blot.

At play and in school he would fracture each rule —.
In mischief from autumn to spring;
And the villagers knew when to manhood he grew
He would never amount to a thing.

When Jim was a child he was not very wild;
He was known as a good little boy;
He was honest and bright and the teacher's delight —
To his mother and father a joy.

All the neighbours were sure that his virtue'd endure,
That his life would be free of a spot;
They were certain that Jim had a great head on him
And that Jim would amount to a lot.

And Jim grew to manhood and honour and
fame
And bears a good name;
While Bill is shut up in a dark prison cell —
You never can tell.

Help

The Passionate Householder to his Love

Come, live with us and be our cook,
And we will all the whimsies brook
That German, Irish, Swede, and Slav
And all the dear domestics have.

And you shall sit upon the stoop
What time we go and cook the soup,
And you shall hear, both night and day,
Melodious pianolas play.

And we will make the beds, of course,
You'll have two autos and a horse,
A lady to Marcel your tresses,
And all the madame's half-worn dresses.

Your gowns shall be of lace and silk,
Your laving shall be done in milk.
Two trained physicians when you cough,
And Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays off.

When you are mashing Irish spuds
You'll wear the very finest duds.
If good to you these prospects look,
Come, live with us and be our cook.

Tobogganing on Parnassus

On callers we have put no stops,
We love the iceman and the cops,
And no alarm clock with its ticks
And bell to ring at half-past six.

O Gretchen, Bridget, Hulda, Mary,
Come, be our genius culinary.
If good to you these prospects look,
Come, live with us and be our cook.

The Servants

With genuflexions to Kipling's *"The Ladies"*

We've taken our cooks where we've found
'em;
We've answered many an ad;
We've had our pickin' o' servants,
And most of the lot was bad.
Some was Norahs an' Bridgets;
Tillie she came last fall;
Claras and Fannies and Lenas and Annies,
And now we've got none at all.

Now, we don't know much about servants,
For, takin' 'em all along,
You never can tell till you've tried 'em,
And then you are like to be wrong.
There's times when you'll think that they're
perfect;
There's times when you'll think that they're
bum,
But the things you'll learn from those that
have gone
May help you with those to come.

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Norah, she landed from Dublin,
Green as acushla machree;
Norah was willing and anxious
To learn what a servant should be.
We told Mrs. Kirk all about her —
She offered her seven more per —
Now Norah she works, as you know, for the Kirks —
And we learned about servants from her.

Lena we got from an "office";
Lena was saving and Dutch —
Thought that our bills were enormous,
And told us we spent far too much.
Lena decamped with some silver,
Jewelry, laces and fur —
She was loving and kind, with a Socialist mind—
And we learned about servants from her.

Tillie blew in from the Indies,
Black as the middle of night —
Cooked like a regular Savarin —
Kitchen was shiny an' bright.
Everything ran along lovely
Until — it was bound to occur —
She ran away with a porter one day —
But we learned about servants from her.

The Servants

We've taken our cooks where we've found
them,
Yellow and black and white;
Some was better than others,
But none of the lot was right.
And the end of it's only worry
And trouble and bother and fuss —
When you answer an ad., think of those we
have had
And learn about servants from us.

Our Dum'd Animals

What time I seek my virtuous couch to steal
  Some surcease from the labours of the day,
Ere silence like a poultice comes to heal —
  In short, when I prepare to hit the hay;
Ere slumber's chains (I quote from Moore) have bound me,
I hear a lot of noises all around me.

Time was when falling off the well-known log
  Were harder far than falling off to sleep;
But that was ere my neighbour's gentle dog
  Began to think he was defending sheep.
From twelve to two his barking and his howling
Accompanies two tom cats' nightly yowling.

At two-ten sharp the parrot in the flat
  Across the way his monologue essays.
At three, again, as Gilbert says, the cat;
  At four a milkman's horse, exulted, neighs.
At six-fifteen, nor does it ever vary,
I hear the dulcet tones of a canary.

Our Dum'd Animals

Each living thing I love; I love the birds;
The beasts in field and forest, too, I love,
But I have writ these poor, if metric words,
To query which, by all the pow'rs above,
Of all the animals — pray tell me, some one —
Is called by any courtesy a dumb one?

A Soft Susurrus

A soft susurrus in the night,
A song whose singer is unseen —
'Twere poetry itself to write
"A soft susurrus in the night!"
I know, as those mosquitos bite,
That I forgot to fix that screen,
"A soft susurrus in the night!"
A song whose singer is unseen.

A Summer Summary

Shall I, lying in a grot,
Die because the day is hot?
Or declare I can't endure
Such a torrid temperature?
Be it hotter than the flames
South Gehenna Junction claims,
  If it be not so to me,
  What care I how hot it be?

Shall I say I love the town
Praised by Robinson and Browne?
Shall I say, "In summer heat
Old Manhattan can't be beat?"
Be it luring as a bar,
Or my neighbour's motor-car,
  If I think it is pazziz
  What care I how fine it is?

Shall I prate of rural joys
Far from civic smoke and noise?
Shall I, like the others, drool
"But the nights are always cool?"
If I hate to rise at six
Shall I praise the suburbs? Nix!
  If the country's not for me,
  What care I how good it be?

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Town or country, cool or hot,
Differs nothing, matters not;
For to quote that Roman cuss,
Why dispute "de gustibus?"
If to this or that one should
Take a fancy, it is good.
  If these rhymes look good to me,
  What care I how bad they be?

A Quatrain

A quatrain fills a little space,
  Although it's pretty small,
And oftentimes, as in this case,
  It has no point at all.

To a Light Housekeeper

(Who hitches laundering articles to the curtain string and pastes them on the pane.)

Lady, thou that livest
Just across the way,
If a hang thou givest
What the people say,
If a cuss thou carest
What a poet thinks —
Hearken, if thou darest,
Most immodest minx!

Though thy gloves thou tiest,
To the curtain string,
Though the things thou driest
Gird me while I sing,
Hankies and inventions
Of the lacy tribe —
Things I may not mention,
Let alone describe.

These I mutely stand for
Though the sight offend,
THIS I reprimand for;
Take it from a friend:

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Cease to pin thy tresses
To the window sill,
Or I'll tell the presses —
Honestly, I will.

How?

How can I work when you play the piano,
Feminine person above?
How can I think, with your ceaseless soprano
Singing: "Ah, Love —— "?

How can I dream of a subject æsthetic,
Far from the purlieus of prose?
How, with the call of the peripatetic
"High! High cash clo'es!"?

How can I write when the children are crying?
How can I poetize — how?
How can I help imper*fect* versifying?
(There is some now.)

How can I bathe in the thought-waves of beauty?
How, with my nerves on the slant,
Can I perform my poetical duty?
Frankly, I can't.

Ballade of the Breakfast Table

When the Festal Board, as the papers say,
Groans 'neath the weight of a lot to eat,
At breakfast, *Frühstück* or *déjeuner*,
(As a bard tri-lingual I'm rather neat)
At breakfast, then, if I may repeat,
This is what gets me into a huff,
This is a query I cannot beat:
Why don't they ever have spoons enough?

I've broken my fast with the grave and gay,
With *hoi polloi* and with the *élite;*
I've been all over the U. S. A.
From Dorchester Crossing to Kearney Street.
But aye when I sit in the morning seat
Comes to my notice the self-same bluff,
Plenty of food, but in this they cheat:
Why don't they ever have spoons enough?

Take it at breakfast, only to-day:
This was the layout, fresh and sweet:
Canteloupe, sweet as the new-mown hay;*
Cereal — one of the brands** of wheat;

*And about as edible.
**To advertisers: This space for sale.

Ballade of the Breakfast Table

Soft-boiled eggs (we've cut out the meat);
Coffee (a claro-manila-buff);
Napery, china, and glasses complete —
Why don't they ever have spoons enough?

L'ENVOI

Autocratesses, forgive my heat,
But isn't it time to change that stuff?
Small is the benison I entreat —
Why don't they ever have spoons enough?

Ornithology

Unlearned I in ornithology —
  All I know about the birds
Is a bunch of etymology,
  Just a lot of high-flown words.
Is the curlew an uxorial
  Bird? The Latin name for crow?
Is the bulfinch grallatorial?
    I dunno.

O'er my head no golden gloriole
  Ever shall be proudly set
For my knowledge of the oriole,
  Eagle, ibis, or egrette.
I know less about the tanager
  And its hopes and fears and aims
Than a busy Broadway manager
    Does of James.

But, despite my incapacity
  On the birdies of the air,
I am not without sagacity,
  Be it ne'er so small a share.
This I know, though ye be scorning at
  What I know not, though ye mock,
Birdies wake me every morning at
    Four o'clock.

To Alice-Sit-By-The-Hour

Lady in the blue kimono, you that live across
the way,
One may see you gazing, gazing, gazing all
the livelong day,
Idly looking out your window from your
vantage point above.
Are you convalescent, lady? Are you worse?
Are you in love?

Ever gazing, as you hang there on the little
window seat,
Into flats across the way or down upon the
prosy street.
Can't you rent a pianola? Can't you iron,
sew, or cook?
Write a letter, bake a pudding, make a bed
or read a book?

Tell me of the fascination you indubitably find
In the "High Cash Cloe's!" man's holler,
in the hurdy-gurdy grind.
Are your Spanish castles blue prints? Are
you waiting for a knight
To descend upon your fastness and to save
you from your plight?

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Lady in the blue kimono, idle, mollycoddle
dame,
Does your doing nothing never make you feel
the blush of shame?
As you sit and stare and ditto, not a single
thing to do,
Lady in the blue kimono, lady, how I envy
you!

To Alice-Sit-By-The-Hour

(Being the second idyl to an idle idol.)

Lady in the blue kimono,
  May we write of you again?
Do not hand us out a "No! no!"
  Do not dam the flowing pen.
Once again a poem at you
  Crave we leave of you to write —
Lady idle as a statue,
  Lady silent as the night!

Lady in the blue kimono,
  Heavy is our heart and dumb,
Though we weep no tear nor show no
  Sign of sadness, we are glum;
For that wrapper, silk or cotton,
  You eternally had on —
It is gone, but not forgotten.
  Still the fact is, it is gone.

Lady in the blue kimono,
  Although deadly hot the day,
Don't you think — (alas! we know no
  Way to put what we would say!)

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Er — although your smile is pleasant,
Wondrous fair, and all that stuff —
Do you really think, at present,
It is — er — ahem — enough?

Notions

Myrtie, my notion of no one to write about
Seems to be any one other than you;
Therefore, Myrtilla, I'm penning to-night about
Twelve anapestic good verses and true.

Eke my conception of no girl to gaze upon,
O my Myrtilla, includes all the rest,
Saving the one that I'm spilling this praise upon —
You, as it isn't unlikely you've guessed.

Also my notion of nowhere to be at all —
Pardon, Myrtilla, my lack of restraint —
Notion of mapless location is —— d. it all —
Anywhere you simultaneous ain't.

My Ladye's Eyen

Poets ther ben in plenteous line yt take ye
auncient theme
Of singing to a ladye's eyen whiche maken
them to dreme,
And through ye blessed hours of slepe — thilk
eyen or browne or blue
Doe soothe ye poet's slumbers deep: by
goddiswoundes thaie doe!

O gentil reder, wit ye well, yt mony soche
ther bee,
And whan an eyefulle damosel hath made a
hitte wyth mee,
Hir eyen ben soe o'erpassing bright yt holden
mee in thrall,
I tosse about ye livelong night, nor can ne
slepe atte all.

To a Lady

Ah, Lady, if these verses glowed
  Warmer than chill appreciation —
If they should lengthen to an "Ode
  On Fascination — "

If I should cast this cold restraint,
  Nor dam this pen's o'ereager flowing —
If but your portrait I should paint
  In colours glowing —

Assuming I should write such dope —
  If, haply, you can but conceive it —
As Fahrenheit as Laurence Hope —
  You'd not believe it.

YOU'D not; but, oh, Another would!
  For, by and large and altogether,
Us potes must be misunderstood.

* * *

What lovely weather!

"A Perfect Woman Nobly Planned"

(The man who wants the perfect wife should marry a "stock-size." She comes cheaper.—*London Chronicle.*)

Ah, Myrtilla, woe and dear me!
Lackadaydee and alas!
What is this, I greatly fear me,
That has come to pass?

Craving, as I do, perfection,
Loathing anything like flaws,
I must raise a slight objection
To your building laws.

You are five one-and-a-quarter,
And your girth is thirty-three —
Myrtie, you're a little shorter
Than you ought to be.

It is far from my intentions
Your proportions to describe,
Briefly, Myrtie, your dimensions
Do not seem to jibe.

Farewell, Myrt, for Ethelisa
Seems to be my certain fate,
Stupid? Silly? Sure, but she's a
Perfect thirty-eight.

An Ultimatum to Myrtilla

(Inspired by the shameless styles in hair.)

Ah, Myrtilla mine, you said —
  And your tone was earnest, very —
You would never deck your head
  With this vernal millinery.

Myrt, to mince no words, you lied;
  Oh, that I should live to know it!
You that are my nearly-bride;
  I that am your nearly-poet!

For I saw the awful lid
  You had on at 10 this morning;
Myrt, it was a merrywid,
  Spite of my decisive warning.

Still, I can forgive you that;
  Though the thing look ne'er so silly;
I will overlook the hat
  If you promise this, Myrtillie:

Wear your lacebelows and fluffs;
  Wear the awfullest creations ——
But — omit the stylish puffs
  And the vogueish transformations.

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Myrt, if you inflate your hair
I shall — well — excoriate you,
And, I positively swear,
Loathe, despise, detest, and hate you.

Love Gustatory

Myrtilla, I have seen you eat —
  Have heard you drink, to be precise —
Your soup, and, notwithstanding, sweet,
  The gurgitation wasn't nice,
I overlooked a tiny fault
Like that with just a grain of salt.

And, sweetest maid in all New York,
  When all ungracefully you pierce
The toothsome oyster with your fork
  I realize you're pretty fierce;
But such a feat, be't understood,
Nor Venus nor Diana could.

I've seen you hang, high in the air,
  A stalk of fresh asparagus,
Guiding its succulence to where
  It ought to go. I did not cuss.
You had it hot and vinaigrette,
Myrtilla, and I loved you yet.

Myrt, I have stood for a good deal,
  As one will in this Cupid game,
But now I know I'll never feel
  Toward you, dear Tillie, quite the same
Since I have seen you on the job
Of eating corn — corn on the cob.

She Is Not Fair

"She is not fair to outward view";
No beauty hers of form or face·
She hath no witchery, 'tis true,
No grace.

Nor pretty wit, nor well-stored mind,
Nor azure eyes, nor golden hair
Hath she. She is — I am not blind —
Not fair.

What makes me love her, then? say you,
For such a maid is not my wont.
Love her! What makes you think I do?
I don't.

To Myrtilla Again

Myrtilla, when the thought of you
Obstructs my cold, unbiased view,
And keeps me from
My hard though hum-
Ble task,
I do not murmur nor complain·
I do not ululate nor feign
A love for *vin*
Or what is in
A flask.

When, as I said in stanza first,
My mind is thoroughly immersed
With you until
My pulses thrill
And throb,
I don't, in tones more picturesque
Than journalistic, slam my desk,
And in a fit
Of frenzy quit
My job.

Tobogganing on Parnassus

When, as I may have said before,
Your image I can not ignore,
I do not tear
My thinning hair
Nor cuss;
I leave such sentimental show
To bards like Shelley, Keats, and Poe
I merely spill
Some ink, Myrtil-
La, thus.

Myrtilla's Third Degree

(With deep bows to Adelaide Anne Proctor's heirs, administrators and assigns.)

Before I trust my Fate to thee,
  Or place my hand in thine —
(This is an easy parody,
  Without a change of line.)
Before I peril all for thee, question thy soul
    to-night for me.

Is there, within thy dimmest dreams,
  This dread ambition, Myrt?
Hast thou the ghost of a desire
  To wear a hobble* skirt?
If so, at any pain or cost, oh, tell me before
    all is lost.

Look deeper still. Dost underline
  Most words in writing letters?
Or "Local" write on envelopes?
  Say, ere I bind my fetters.
Let no false pity spare the blow, but in true
    mercy tell me so.

*"Harem," or whatever is to come in the future, may be substituted here.

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Once more. Dost thou, in easy speech,
  Ever let fall "those kind"?
Art thou to nutmeg in a pie
  Unalterably inclined?
If aught of these, maid of my wooing, there's
    absolutely nothing doing.

To Myrtilla Complaining

Myrtie, you weep that the bard has neglected
you,
Passed you, forgotten you, let you alone.
Bless you, Myrtilla, I never suspected you
Ever would speak to me, sweet, in that tone.

Myrtie, you say that my poems are penned
to you
Only on days when I've nothing to do,
Otherwise I have no time to attend to you,
Others, you say, are more weighty than you.

Sweet, you allege I have not enough time for
you,
Yes, and you say that I hold you but light,
Only when pressed do I reel off a rhyme for
you

* * *

Lady Myrtilla, you've doped it out right.

Christmas Cards

I

TO THE GROCERY BOY

Before you send me up that card
With rime and diction far from subtle,
Hear what a now rebellious bard
Says in a quasi-pre-rebuttal.

"A nickel in a poor boy's hat!"
You, minion of a grubbing grocer,
You dare, indeed, to ask me that?
Bold and relentless, say I, "No, sir!"

You who bring some one else's tea
To us, while ours goes to the neighbours,
And yet you dare demand from me
Reward for inefficient labours!

You who but lately made me hit
My head upon the dum-dum waiter —
From me you get no silver bit.
Fie, out upon you, youthful traitor!

Christmas Cards

Hard is my heart and tight my purse;
  Deaf is my ear to all your suing.
Except this little bit of verse,
  There's absolutely nothing doing.

II

TO THE JANITOR

Sullen, surly Scandinave,
  Smoking on a pipe,
Valiantly I cast the glave
  At thee and thy type.

Person of the shakeless grouch
  Tamperer with the cream,
Idler, lounger, sloven, slouch
  Despot of the steam —

Thou who bangest garbage cans
  In the hollow court,
Thou whose children spin tin pans
  Deeming it is sport —

Tyrant of the tenement,
  Take thy card and flee!
Not a nickel, not a cent
  Dost thou get from me.

III

TO THE WAITER

O waiter, will you tell me why
You think to get at Christmas time
A five-case note, for do not I
Slip you each day a dime?

When as I crave Prime Ribs au Jus*
And beg that you will bring them rare,
They are well done. I fume and fuss
And yet you do not care.

Haply I order apple pie,
But NOT your counsel or advice;
You rub your hands and tell me: "Why,
The mince is very nice."

You hide my hat, you hide my coat.
Let others, if they care to, give,
But as to this here gentle pote —
Be glad he lets you live.

*Well, how do you pronounce it, then?

IV

TO THE APARTMENT HOUSE TELEPHONE GIRL

Proud, imperious female person
That presideth o'er my 'phone,
Hearken while I do some verse on
Thee, and thee alone.

Puffed and pompadoured and ratted,
  Reading *Munsey's* all the day,
Pony-coated, otter-hatted —
  Listen to my lay:

When I beg in desperation,
  "Eight O Seven Riverside,"
Why do I get "Information"?
  Is it justified?

Why — I ask it with insistence —
  Why — prepare to be appalled —
Why "$2.85 Long Distance"
  That I never called?

When I call thee, "They don't answer"
  Tells me Central. (Oh, the crime!)
Then thou sayest, thou Romancer,
  "Been here all the time!"

Tyrant trim and telephonic,
  Christmas offerings to thee?
Pardon if I seem laconic:
  Not a single c.

V

TO THE BARBER

Prince of the parlour tonsorial,
  Knight of the razor and shears,
Who have from time immemorial
  Snipped it too short round the ears —

Tobogganing on Parnassus

You with your long academical
  Causes for "thinning on top,"
Selling me gallons of chemical
  Tonic, a brush, and a strop;

You with your sad comicality,
  You with your bum badinage —
Confound your congeniality!
  Confound your "Facial Massage?"

Still, though you shave contragrainious,*
  Healing the cut with a lime,
Don't I, quite nice and spontaneous,
  Daily contribute a dime?

Mountain of foreign servility,
  Butcher of chin and of lip.
Maugre your marked inability,
  Do I not fall for the tip?

Hope you at Christmas for currency,
  Fiend of tonsorial tricks?
Never was greater aberrancy —
  Coarsely I say to you, "Nix!"

*Well, there ought to be.

VI

TO THE HALL-AND-ELEVATOR-BOY

Lo, the West Indian! whose untutored mind
To Christmas giving makes me disinclined,
Who tellest callers I have moved away
And mixest up the morning mail each day.

Christmas Cards

When for thine elevator car I ring
Thou telephonest or some other thing;
While, when I ask for Byrant Eighty-four,
Thou'rt busy somewhere on the seventh floor—
I wish thee from my soul all Christmas joy,
But not a cent, O Elevator Boy!

Ballade of a Hardy Annual

Many a jest that refuses to die
  Bobs up again as the seasons appear;
Deathless it hits us again in the eye —
  Changeless and dull as the calendar year.
  Musty and mouldy and yellow and sere,
Stronger, withal, than the sturdiest oak;
  Ancient and solemn and deadly and drear —
Down with the grandmother-funeral joke!

Soon as the snow has forgotten to fly,
  All through the day of the "leathery sphere,"
Jokelets and pictures and verses we spy
  All on the theme of the grandmother dear.
  Bonnets, umbrellas, and buckets of beer
Please us and tickle us quite to the choke.
  But — on this matter our attitude's clear —
Down with the grandmother-funeral joke!

Giggle we can at a blueberry pie;
  Scream at a comedy king or ameer;
Simply guffaw when the jestermen guy
  Marriage, a thing at which no one should jeer.
  Things that in others elicit a tear

Ballade of A Hardy Annual

All of our risibles simply unyoke;
But from this stand we're unwilling to veer:
Down with the grandmother-funeral joke!

L'ENVOI

Brothers in motley, the season is here;
Small is the boon that we sadly invoke:
Butcher it, murder it, jump on its ear! —
Down with the grandmother-funeral joke!

A Plea

Writers of baseball, attention!
When you're again on the job —
When, in your rage for invention,
You with the language play hob —
Most of your dope we will pardon,
Though of the moth ball it smack;
But — cut out the "sinister garden,"
Chop the "initial sack."

Rake poor old Roget's "Thesaurus"
For phrases fantastic and queer;
And though on occasions you bore us,
We will refrain from a sneer.
We will endeavour to harden
Ourselves to the rest of your clack,
If you'll cut out the "sinister garden"
And chop the "initial sack."

Singers of words that are scrambled,
Say, if you will, that he "died,"
Write, if you must, that he "ambled" —
We shall be last to deride.
But us to the Forest of Arden,
Along with the misanthrope Jaques,
If you cling to the "sinister garden"
And stick to "initial sack."

A Plea

Speak of the "sphere's aberration,"
  Mention the "leathery globe,"
Say he got "free transportation" —
  Though that try the patience of Job.
But if you're wise you'll discard en-
  Cumbrances such as we thwack —
Especially "sinister garden"
  And the "initial sack."

Footlight Motifs

I

MRS. FISKE

Staccato, hurried, nervous, brisk,
  Cascading, intermittent, choppy,
The brittle voice of Mrs. Fiske
  Shall serve me now as copy.
Assist me, O my Muse, what time
I pen a bit of Deathless Rhyme!

Time was, when first that voice I heard,
  Despite my close and tense endeavour,
When many an important word
  Was lost and gone forever;
Though, unlike others at the play,
I never whispered: "Wha'd'd she say?"

Some words she runstogetherso;
  Some others are distinctly stated;
Some cometoofast and some too slow
  And some are syncopated.
And yet no voice — I am sincere —
Exists that I prefer to hear.

For what is called "intelligence"
By every Mrs. Fiskeian critic
As usual is just a sense
Of humour, analytic.
So any time I'm glad to frisk
Two bones to witness Mrs. Fiske.

Footlight Motifs

II

OLGA NETHERSOLE

I like little Olga,
  Her plays are so warm;
And if I don't see 'em,
  They'll do me no harm.

My Puritan training
  Has kept me from going
To dramas in which
  Little Olga was showing.

But I like little Olga,
  Her art is so warm;
And if I don't see her
  She'll do me no harm.

Ballade of the Average Reader

I try to touch the public taste,
For thus I earn my daily bread.
I try to write what folks will paste
In scrap books after I am dead.
By Public Craving I am led.
(I' sooth, a most despotic leader)
Yet, though I write for Tom and Ned,
I've never seen an average reader.

The Editor is good and chaste,
But says: (Above the public's head;
This is *too* good; 'twill go to waste.
Write something commonplacer —
Ed.)
Write for the average reader, fed
By pre-digested near-food's feeder,
But though my high ideals have fled,
I've never *seen* an average reader.

How many lines have been erased!
How many fancies have been shed!
How many failures might be traced
To this — this average-reader dread!
I've seen an average single bed;
I've seen an average garden-weeder;
I've seen an average cotton thread —
I've *never* seen an average *reader*.

L'ENVOI

Most read of readers, if you've read
The works of any old succeeder,
You know that he, too, must have said:
"I've never seen an Average Reader."

Poesy's Guerdon

(* * * I do not believe a single modern English poet is living to-day on the current proceeds of his verse. — From "Literary Taste and How to Form it," by Arnold Bennett.)

What time I pen the Mighty Line
Suffusëd with the spark divine
As who should say: "By George! That's fine!"

Indignantly do I deny
The words of Arnold Bennett. Why,
Is this not English verse? say I.

And by the proceeds of that verse —
Such as, *e. g.*, these little terc-
Ets — is not filled the family purse?

Do we not live on what I sell,
Sonnet, ballade, and villanelle?

* * *

"We do," She says, "and none too well."

Signal Service

Time-table! Terrible and hard
To figure! At some station lonely
We see this sign upon the card:
*

We read thee wrong; the untrained eye
Does not see always with precision.
The train we thought to travel by
†

Again, undaunted, we look at
The hieroglyphs, and as a rule a
Small double dagger shows us that
‡

And when we take a certain line
On Tues., Wednes., Thurs., Fri., Sat., or
Monday,
We're certain to detect the sign:
§

*Train 20: Stops on signal only.
†Runs only on North-west division.
‡Train does not stop at Ashtabula.
§$10 extra fare ex. Sunday.

Signal Service

Heck Junction — Here she comes! Fft! Whiz!
A scurry — and the train has flitted!
Again we look. We find it — viz.,
||

Through hieroglyphic seas we wade —
Print is so cold and so unfeeling.
The train we wait at Neverglade
¶

Now hungrily the sheet we scan,
Grimy with travel, thirsty, weary,
And then — nothing is sadder than
☞

Yet, cursëd as is every sign,
The cussedest that we can quote is
This treacherous and deadly line:
***

||Train does not stop where time omitted.
¶Connects with C. & A. at Wheeling.
☞ No diner on till after Erie.
***Subject to change without our notice.

Sporadic Fiction

Why not a poem as they treat
The stories in the magazines?
"Eustacia's lips were very sweet.
He stooped to" — and here intervenes
A line — italics — telling one
Where one may learn the things that he,
The noble hero, had begun.
(*Continuation on page 3.*)

Page 3 — oh, here it is — no, here —
"Kiss them. Eustacia hung her head;
Whereat he said, 'Eustacia dear' —
And sweetly low Eustacia said:"
(*Continued on page 17.*)
Here, just between the corset ad.
And that of Smithers' Canderine.
(Eustacia sweet, you drive me mad.)

"No, no, not that! But let me tell
You why I scorn your ardent kiss —
Not that I do not love you well;"
No, Archibald, the reason's this:
(*Continued on page 24.*)
Turn, turn my leaves, and let me learn
Eustacia's fate; I pine for more;
Oh, turn and turn and turn and turn!

"Because — and yet I ought not say
The wherefore of my sudden whim."
Here Archibald looked at Eusta-
Cia, and Eustacia looked at him.
"Because," continued she, "my head —"
I never knew Eustacia's fate,
I never knew what 'Stacia said.

(*Continued on page 58.*)

Popular Ballad: "Never Forget Your Parents"

A young man once was sitting
  Within a swell café,
The music it was playing sweet —
  The people was quite gay.
But he alone was silent,
  A tear was in his eye —
A waitress she stepped up to him, and
  Asked him gently why.

(Change to Minor.)

He turned to her in sorrow and
  At first he spoke no word,
But soon he spoke unto her, for
  She was an honest girl.
He rose up from the table
  In that elegant café,
And in a voice replete with tears
  To her he then did say:

CHORUS

Never forget your father,
  Think all he done for you;
A mother is a boy's best friend,
  So loving, kind, and true,

"Never Forget Your Parents"

If it were not for them, I'm sure
I might be quite forlorn;
And if your parents had not have lived
You would not have been born.

A hush fell on the laughing throng,
It made them feel quite bad,
For most of them was people, and
Some parents they had had.
Both men and ladies did shed tears.
The music it did cease.
For all knew he had spoke the truth
By looking at his face.

(Change to Minor.)

The waitress she wept bitterly
And others was in tears
It made them think of the old home
They had not saw in years.
And while their hearts was heavy and
Their eyes they was quite red.
This brave and honest boy again
To them these words he said:

CHORUS

Never forget, etc.

Ballade to a Lady

(To Annabelle.)

Pipe to the tip I'm handing, Kid;
  Get jerry to the salve I throw;
Just paste it in your merrywid
  While I pull out the tremolo.
  This stuff ain't any paper snow —
I never was a bull con gee —
  Wise up to this and sing it slow:
You make an awful splash with me.

My line of bunk is like to skid;
  (The subject is so smooth — get joe?)
My fountain pen's an invalid;
  I can't dope words like L. Defoe
  Puts in describing up a show,
But, kiddo, you have put the bee
  On father, surest thing you know.
You make an awful splash with me.

Yop, I'm your little katydid;
  Just listen to my chirp of woe;
And now I've made my little bid —
  You get it? Follow me? Right-O!
  If I could shoot like Eddie Poe,
I guess that you'd be h-e-p,
  But here's the bet, now cop it, bo,
You make an awful splash with me.

Ballade to a Lady

L'ENVOI

Well, this is where the stuff I stow,
According to old François V;
But — once again before I blow —
You make an awful splash with me.

To a Thesaurus

O precious codex, volume, tome,
  Book, writing, compilation, work
Attend the while I pen a pome,
  A jest, a jape, a quip, a quirk.

For I would pen, engross, indite,
  Transcribe, set forth, compose, address,
Record, submit — yea, even write
  An ode, an elegy to bless —

To bless, set store by, celebrate,
  Approve, esteem, endow with soul,
Commend, acclaim, appreciate,
  Immortalize, laud, praise, extol.

Thy merit, goodness, value, worth,
  Expedience, utility —
O manna, honey, salt of earth,
  I sing, I chant, I worship thee!

How could I manage, live, exist,
  Obtain, produce, be real, prevail,
Be present in the flesh, subsist,
  Have place, become, breathe or inhale.

To a Thesaurus

Without thy help, recruit, support,
  Opitulation, furtherance,
Assistance, rescue, aid, resort,
  Favour, sustention and advance?

Alas! Alack! and well-a-day!
  My case would then be dour and sad,
Likewise distressing, dismal, gray,
  Pathetic, mournful, dreary, bad.

* * *

Though I could keep this up all day,
  This lyric, elegiac, song,
Meseems hath come the time to say
  Farewell! Adieu! Good-by! So long!

The Ancient Lays

I cannot sing the old songs
I sang long years ago,
But I can always hear them
At any vodevil show.

Erring in Company

("If I have erred I err in company with Abraham Lincoln." — THEODORE ROOSEVELT.)

If e'er my rhyming be at fault,
  If e'er I chance to scribble dope,
If that my metre ever halt,
  I err in company with Pope.

An that my grammar go awry,
  An that my English be askew,
Sooth, I can prove an alibi —
  The Bard of Avon did it, too.

If often toward the bottled grape
  My errant fancy fondly turns,
Remember, jeering jackanape,
  I err in company with Burns.

If now and then I sigh "Mine own!"
  Unto another's wedded wife,
Remember I am not alone —
  Hast ever read Lord Byron's Life?

If frequently I fret and fume,
  And absolutely will not smile,
I err in company with Hume,
  Old Socrates and T. Carlyle.

Tobogganing on Parnassus

If e'er I fail in etiquette,
  And foozle on The Proper Stuff
Regarding manners, don't forget
  A. Tennyson's were pretty tough.

Eke if I err upon the side
  Of talking overmuch of Me,
I err, it cannot be denied,
  In most illustrious company.

The Limit

While I hold as superficial him who has his
young initial
Neatly graven on his Turkish cigarette,
Such a bit of affectation I can view with toler-
ation,
Such a folly I forgive and I forget.
Him who rocks the little boat, or him who rides
the cyclemotor
I dislike a little more than just enough;
But you might as well be knowing that the
guy who gets me going
Is the man who wears his kerchief in his cuff.

Now I've builded many a verse on that
extremely stylish person
Who insists upon the hat of emerald hue;
I have made a lot of fun of things that honestly
were none of
My blanked business — and I knew that
it was true.
At the shameless subway smoker I have been
a ceaseless joker ——
For that nuisance daily gets me in a huff —
But the one that makes me maddest is that
pestilential faddist
Who is carrying his kerchief in his cuff.

Tobogganing on Parnassus

I'm a passive, harmless hater of the vari-
coloured gaiter
That the men of the Rialto will affect;
Of the loud and sassy clother, I'm a quiet,
modest loather,
And to comic section weskits I object.
But, as I have intimated, hinted, innuendoed
stated,
Of the things that I believe are awful stuff,
Nothing starts my indignation like the silly
affectation
Of the man who wears his kerchief in his
cuff ——
E-nough!
Of the man who wears his kerchief in his
cuff.

Chorus for Mixed Voices

(Being a stenographic report of how it sounds from the piazza when a dozen boat loads go out on the lake of a summer evening.)

How can I bear to good old Yale the shades
of Upidee
That's where my heart is weep no more in
sunny Tennessee
How dear to heart grows weary far from mea-
dow grass is blue
Above Cayuga's waters we will sing I'm strong
for you.

A Spanish cava fare thee well and every-
thing so fine
That's where you get your old black Joe my
darling Clementine
The old folks would enjoy it on the road to
Mandalay
'Twas from Aunt Dinah's polly-wolly-woodle
all the day.

I hear those good night ladies much obliged
because we're here

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Afraid to go home in the with a good song
ringing clear
Just tell them that fair Harvard old Nassau
is shining bright
How can I bear to grand old rag we roll along
good night!

The Translated Way

(Being a "lyric" translation of Heine's "Du Bist Wie Eine Blume," as it is usually done.)

Thou art like to a Flower,
So pure and clean thou art;
I view thee and much Sadness
Steals to me in the Heart.

To me it seems my Hands I
Should now impose on your
Head, praying God to keep you
So fine and clean and pure.

"And Yet It Is A Gentle Art!"

(Parody is a *genre* frowned upon by your professors of literature . . . And yet it is a gentle art — "The Point of View" in May *Scribner's*.)

A sweet disorder in the verse
  That never looks behind
Shall profit not who steals my purse,
  Let joy be unconfined!

How vainly men themselves amaze!
  The stars began to blink,
An art that there were few to praise,
  Nor any drop to drink.

O sleep, it is a blessed thing
  Which I must ne'er enjoy!
There never was a fairer spring
  Than when I was a boy.

One fond embrace and then we part!
  Good-by, my lover, good-by!
And yet it is a gentle art,
  Which nobody can deny.

Occasionally

Now and then there's a couple whose conjugal life
Is happy as happy can be;
Now and then there's a man who believes that his wife
Is the One Unsurpassable She;
There are doubtless in England a great many folks
Whose humour is airy and sage;
But there never is one in American jokes
Or on the American stage

Now and then there's an auto that doesn't break down,
Or an angler who catches some fish;
Now and then there's a pretty society gown
Or a girl that breaks never a dish;
There is haply a Crœsus who isn't a hoax.
Or a jest that's not hoary with age;
But there never is one in American jokes
Or on the American stage.

Now and then there's a poet with closely cropped hair,
Or a sporting man quiet in dress;

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Now and then there's a lady from Boston
who's fair,
Now and then there's a fetterless press;
Now and then there's a laugh that a jester
may coax,
A librettist may put on his page ——
But they're terribly rare in American jokes,
And — oh, the American stage!

Jim and Bill

Bill Jones was cynical and sad;
He thought sincerity was rare;
Most people, Bill believed, were bad
And few were fair.

He said that cheating was the rule;
That nearly everything was fake;
That nearly all, both knave and fool,
Were on the make.

Jim Brown was cheerful as the sun;
He thought the world a lovely place,
Exhibiting to every one
A smiling face.

He thought that every man was fair;
He had no cause to sob or sigh;
He said that everything was square
As any die.

Dear reader, would you rather be
Like Jim, not crediting the ill,
Joyous in your serenity,
Or right, like Bill?

When Nobody Listens

At not at all infrequent spells
I hear — and so do you —
The tales that everybody tells
And no one listens to.

"You talk about excitement. Well
Last summer, up at Silver Dell,
Jim Brown and I took a canoe
And paddled out a mile or two.
When we left shore the sun was out —
Serenest day, beyond a doubt,
I ever saw. When suddenly
It thunders, and a heavy sea
Comes up. 'I'm goin' to jump,' says Jim.
He jumps. I don't know how to swim,
And I was scared . . ."

"You ought to see
My kid. He's great! He isn't three.
But smart? Last night his mother said,
As she was putting him to bed,
'Tom, are you sleepy?' Well, the kid —
What d'ye think he up and did?
Laugh? Honestly, we nearly died!
He said: . . . "

When Nobody Listens

"Last week I had a ride
As was a ride! We took my car
And ran her over night so far
We had to stop. Just as we came
To this side of North Burlingame,
We tore a shoe; the left front wheel
Got loose and . . . "

"Did you ever feel
That dogs were human? Well, there's Bruce,
My collie — brighter than the deuce!
Just talk in ordinary tones —
A joke, he barks, speak sad, he moans,
The other day I said to him,
'Here, Bruce, take this to Uncle Jim,'
And gave . . . "

"We've really got the best
And cheapest flat in town. On West
Two-Forty-Third Street. That ain't far —
The subway, then the Yonkers car —
An hour, perhaps a little more.
I leave the house at 7.04 —
I'm in the office every day
At nine o'clock. Six rooms are all
We have, if you don't count the hall —
Though it is bigger far than most
The rooms I've seen. I hate to boast
About my flat; but . . . "

Tobogganing on Parnassus

"Say, I've got
The greatest, newest, finest plot —
Dramatic, humorous, and fresh —
And, though I'm not in the profesh,
I'll back this little play of mine
Against Pinero, Fitch, or Klein.
Sure fire! A knockout! It can't miss!
The plot of it begins like this:
The present time — that's what they 've got
To have — and then a modern plot.
Jack Hammond, hero, loves a girl:
Extremely jealous of an earl.
The earl, however . . . "

Why contin-
Ue types that flourish *adinfin?*

O tuneless chimes! O worn-out bells!
I hear — and so do you —
The tales that everybody tells
But no one listens to.

Office Mottoes

Motto heartening, inspiring,
  Framed above my pretty *desk,
Never Shelley, Keats, or Byring*
  Penned a phrase so picturesque!
But in me no inspiration
  Rides my low and prosy brow —
All I think of is vacation
When I see that lucubration:

DO IT NOW

When I see another sentence
  Framed upon a brother's wall,
Resolution and repentance
  Do not flood o'er me at all
As I read that nugatory
  Counsel written years ago,
Only when one comes to borry*
Do I heed that ancient story:

TELL HIM NO

*Entered under the Pure License of 1906.

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Mottoes flat and mottoes silly,
  Proverbs void of point or wit,
"KEEP A-PLUGGIN' WHEN IT'S HILLY!"
  "LIFE'S A TIGER: CONQUER IT!"
Office mottoes make me weary
  And of all the bromide bunch
There is only one I seri-
Ously like, and that's the cheery:

GONE TO LUNCH

Metaphysics

A man morose and dull and sad —
Go ask him why he feels so bad.
Behold! He answers it is drink
That put his nerves upon the blink.

Another man whose smile and jest
Disclose a nature of the best —
What keeps his heart and spirit up?
Again we learn it is the cup.

The moral to this little bit
Is anything you make of it.
Such recondite philosophy
Is far away too much for me.

Heads and Tails

If a single man is studious and quiet, people say
He is grouchy, he is old before his time;
If he's frivolous and flippant, if he treads the primrose way,
Then they mark him for a wild career of crime.

If a man asserts that So-and-So is beautiful or sweet,
He is daffy on the proposition, Girl;
If he's weary in the evening and he keeps his subway seat,
He's immediately branded as a churl.

If he buys a friend a rickey not for any special cause,
He is captain of the lush-and-spendthrift squad;
If, before he spends a million, he will think a bit and pause,
There's a popular impression he's a wad.

Tobogganning on Parnassus

If a man attends to business and looks to
every chance,
He is mercenary, money-mad, and coarse;
If he thinks of art and letters more than
personal finance,
He is lacking in ambition and in force.

If a man but bats his consort oh-so-gently
on the head,
If he throttles her a little round the neck,
He's a brute; if he's considerately conjugal
instead,
Everybody calls him Mr. Henry Peck.

Lowers Scylla — frowns Charybdis — and the
bark is like to sink —
This the symbolistic moral of my rhyme —
If Opinion trims your sails and if you care
what people think
You will have a most unhappy sort of time.

An Election Night Pantoum

Gaze at the good-natured crowd,
  List to the noise and the rattle!
Heavens! that woman is loud —
  Loud as the din of a battle.

List to the noise and the rattle!
  Hark to the honk of the horn
Loud as the din of a battle!
  There! My new overcoat's torn!

Hark to the honk of the horn!
  Cut out that throwing confetti!
There! My new overcoat's torn —
  Looks like a shred of spaghetti.

Cut out that throwing confetti!
  Look at the gentleman, stewed;
Looks like a shred of spaghetti —
  Don't get so terribly rude!

Look at the gentleman, stewed!
  Look at the glare of the rocket!
Don't get so terribly rude,
  Keep your hand out of my pocket!

An Election Night Pantoum

Look at the glare of the rocket!
  Take that thing out of my face!
Keep your hand out of my pocket!
  This is a shame and disgrace.

Take that thing out of my face!
  Curse you! Be decent to ladies!
This is a shame and disgrace,
  Worse than traditions of Hades.

Curse you! Be decent to ladies!
  (Heavens! that woman is loud.)
Worse than traditions of Hades
  Gaze at the "good-natured" crowd!

I Cannot Pay That Premium

Beside a frugal table, though spotless clean
and white,
A loving couple they did sit and all seemed
pleasant, quite;
They did not have no servant the things
away to take,
For he was but a broker who much money
did not make.

(Key changes to minor.)

He lit a fifty-cent cigar and then his wife did
say:
"Your life insurance it will lapse if it you
do not pay."
He turned from her in sorrow, for breaking
was his heart,
And in a mezzo barytone to her did say, in
part:

CHORUS:

"I cannot pay that premium, I'll have to let
it go;
It fills me with remorse and sorrow, not to
mention woe.

I Cannot Pay that Premium

Though I'm quite strong and healthy, and will outlive you, perhaps,
I cannot pay that premium; I'll have to let it lapse."

The wife she naught did answer, for it cut her to the quick;
She washed the dishes, filled the lamp, and likewise trimmed the wick;
She took in washing the next day and played bridge whist all night,
Until she had enough to pay her husband's premium, quite.

(Key changes to minor)

The husband he was thrown next day from his au-to-mo-bile,
And although rather lonesome it did make his widow feel,
It made her glad to know that she had paid that prem-i-um,
And oftentimes in after years these words she'd softly hum:

CHORUS:

"I cannot pay that premium," etc.

Three Authors

Prolific authors, noble three,
I do my derby off to ye.

Selected, dear old chap, who knows
The quantity of verse and prose
That you have signed in all these years!
You've dulled how many thousand shears!
You've filled, at a tremendous rate,
A million miles of "boiler plate" —
A wreath of laurel for your brow!
A stirrup-cup to you — here's how!

And you, dear *Ibid.* Ah, you wrote
Too many things for me to quote,
Though Bartlett, of quotation fame,
Plays up your unpoetic name
More than he did to Avon's bard.
Your stuff's on every page, old pard.
Bouquets to you the writer flings;
You wrote a lot of dandy things.

And you, O last, O greatest one,
A word with you, and I have done.
You, dear *Exchange*, that ever floats
Around with verses, anecdotes,

And jokes. Oh, what a lot you sign
(Quite frequently a thing of mine).
Why, it would not be very strange
If I should see this signed — *Exchange*.

O favourite authors, wondrous three,
I do my derby off to ye!

To Quotation

(Caused by "The Ethics of Misquotation" in the November *Atlantic Monthly*.)

Quotation! Brother to the Arts, assister
to the Muse!
When Bartlett from his study height unfurled
thine heaven-born hues,
The quotes were here, the quotes were there,
the quotes were all around,
For Bartlett like a poultice came to blow the
heels of sound.

Pernicious habit! One becomes a worse than
senseless block,
A bard that no one dares to praise and fewer
care to knock;
A sentence by a mossy stone, of quaint and
curious lore,
An apt quotation is to one and it is nothing
more.

Quotation! Ah, thou droppest as the gentle
rain from heaven,
Thy brow is wet with honest sweat and the
stars on thy head are seven.

To Quotation

Who steals my verse steals trash, for, soothly,
he who runs may read,
But he who filches from me Bartlett leaves
me poor indeed.

I fill this cup to Bartlett up, and may he rest
in peace —
From Afric's sunny fountains to the happy
Isles of Greece.
Quotation! O my Rod and Staff, my Joy
sans let or end
With me abide, O handy guide, philosopher,
and friend.

Melodrama

R

If you want a receipt for a melodramatical,
  Thrillingly thundery, popular show,
Take an old father, unyielding, emphatical,
  Driving his daughter out into the snow;
The love of a hero, courageous and Hacketty;
  Hate of a villain in evening clothes;
Comic relief that is Irish and racketty;
  Schemes of a villainess muttering oaths;
The bank and the safe and the will and the
    forgery —
  All of them built on traditional norms —
Villainess dark and Lucrezia Borgery
  Helping the villain until she reforms;
The old mill at midnight, a rapid delivery;
Violin music, all scary and shivery;
Plot that is devilish, awful, nefarious;
Heroine frightened, her plight is precarious;
Bingo! — the rescue! — the movement goes
    snappily —
Exit the villain and all endeth happily!

Take of these elements any you care about,
Put 'em in Texas, the Bowery, or thereabout;
Put in the powder and leave out the grammar,
And the certain result is a swell melodrammer.

A Poor Excuse, But Our Own

(Why don't you ever write any child poetry?
— A Mother.)

My right-hand neighbour hath a child,
  A pretty child of five or six,
Not more than other children wild,
  Nor fuller than the rest of tricks —
At five he rises, shine or rain,
And noisily plays "fire" or "train."

Likewise a girl, *ætatis* eight,
  He hath. Each morning, as a rule,
Proudly my neighbour will relate
  How bright Mathilda is at school.
My ardour, less than half of mild,
Bids me to comment, "Wondrous child!"

All through the vernal afternoon
  My other neighbour's children skate
A wild Bacchantic rigadoon
  On rollers; nor does it abate
Till dark; and then his babies cry
What time I fain would versify.

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Did I but set myself to sing
A children's song, I'd stand revealed
A bard that did the infant thing
As well as Riley or 'Gene Field.
I could write famous Children Stuff,
If they'd keep quiet long enough.

Monotonous Variety

(All of them from two stories in a single magazine.)

She "greeted" and he "volunteered";
  She "giggled"; he "asserted";
She "queried" and he "lightly veered";
  She "drawled" and he "averted";
She "scoffed," she "laughed" and he
    "averred";
He "mumbled," "parried," and "demurred."

She "languidly responded"; he
  "Incautiously assented";
Doretta "proffered lazily";
  Will "speedily invented";
She "parried," "whispered," "bade," and
    "mused";
He "urged," "acknowledged," and "refused."

She "softly added"; "she alleged";
  He "consciously invited";
She "then corrected"; William "hedged";
  She "prettily recited";
She "nodded," "stormed," and "acquiesced";
He "promised," "hastened," and "confessed."

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Doretta "chided"; "cautioned" Will;
  She "voiced" and he "defended";
She "vouchsafed"; he "continued still";
  She "sneered" and he "amended";
She "smiled," she "twitted," and she "dared"
He "scorned," "exclaimed," "pronounced,"
    and "flared."

He "waived," "believed," "explained," and
    "tried";
  "Commented" she; he "muttered";
She "blushed," she "dimpled," and she
    "sighed";
  He "ventured" and he "stuttered";
She "spoke," "suggested," and "pursued";
He "pleaded," "pouted," "called," and
    "viewed."

* * *

O synonymble writers, ye
  Whose work is so high-pricey.
Think ye not that variety
  May haply be too spicy?
Meseems that in an elder day
They had a thing or two to *say*.

The Amateur Botanist

A primrose by a river's brim
Primula vulgaris was to him,
And it was nothing more;
A pansy, delicately reared,
Viola tricolor appeared
In true botanic lore.

That which a pink the layman deems
Dianthus caryophyllus seems
To any flower-fan; or
A sunflower, in that talk of his,
Annuus helianthus is,
And it is nothing more.

A Word for It

"Scorn not the sonnet." Well, I reckon not.
I would not scorn a rondeau, villanelle,
Ballade, sestina, triolet, rondel,
Or e'en a quatrain, humble and forgot,
An so it made my Pegasus to trot
His morning lap what time he heard the bell;
An so it made the poem stuff to jell —
To mix a met.— an so it boil'd the pot.

Oh, sweet set form that varies not a bit!
I taste thy joy, not quite unknown to Keats.
"Scorn?" Nay, I love thy fine symmetric grace.
In sonnets one knows always where to quit,
Unlike in other poems where one cheats
And strings it out to fill the yawning space.

The Poem Speaks

(Cut this out in either case.)

Poet, ere you write me,
  Stem the flowing ink;
Or that you indite me
  Pause upon the brink.

Strummer of the lyre
  Maker of the tune,
Give me a desire —
  Bless me with a boon.

Let me be a rondeau
  With a sweet refrain,
Or an aliquando
  Sonnet to the rain;

Let me be a lyric
  Tenuous as air,
Or an *à la* Viereck
  Passion song to hair;

Tobogganing on Parnassus

Ballad, epic, quatrain,
Couplet — ay, a line —
"Let it rain or not rain,
Let it storm or shine."

Shape me as you list to,
Glorious or small;
Put a comic twist to
Anything at all.

Only give me fame that
Never, never dies,
Christen me a name that
Reaches to the skies.

This is my ambition:
Not the greatest rhyme,
Not the first position
On the page of time —

But, O poet, steep me,
Till, with gum and hooks,
Womenfolk will keep me
In their pocket-books!

"Bedbooks"

(There is said to be a steady demand for "bedbooks" in England. There are readers who find in Gibbon a sedative for tired nerves; there are others who enjoy Trollope's quiet humour. Some people find in Henry James's tangled syntax the restful diversion they seek, and others enjoy Mr. Howells's unexciting realism. — *The Sun.*)

How sleep the brave who sink to rest,
  Lulled by the waves of dreamy diction,
Like that appearing in the best
    Of modern fiction!

When sleeplessness the Briton claims,
  And hits him with her wakeful wallop,
He goes to Gibbon or to James,
    Or maybe Trollope.

No paltry limit, such as those
  The craving-slumber Yankee curses —
He has a wealth of poppy prose
    And opiate verses.

A grain of — ought I mention names
  And say whence sleep may be inspired?
Is it the thing to say of James,
    "He makes me tired?"

Tobogganing on Parnassus

To say "a dose of Phillips, or
A capsule of Sinclair or Brady,
Is just the thing to make me snore?"
Oh, lackadaydee!

Nay! It were churlish to review
And specify by marked attention
Our bedbooks. They are far too nu-
Merous to mention.

A New York Child's Garden of Verses

(With the usual.)

I

In winter I get up at night,
And dress by an electric light.
In summer, autumn, ay, and spring,
I have to do the self-same thing.

I have to go to bed and hear
Pianos pounding in my ear,
And hear the janitor cavort
With garbage cans within the court.

And does it not seem hard to you
That I should have these things to do?
Is it not hard for us Manhat-
Tan children in a stuffy flat?

II

It is very nice to think
The world is full of food and drink;
But, oh, my father says to me
They cost all of his salaree.

Tobogganing on Parnassus

III

When I am grown to man's estate
I shall be very proud and great;
E'en now I have no reverence,
'Cause I read comic supplements.

IV

New York is so full of a number of kids
I'm sure pretty soon we shall be invalids.

V

A child should always say what's true,
And speak when he is spoken to;
And then, when manhood's age he strikes,
He may be boorish as he likes.

Downward, Come Downward

(With apologies to the estate of Elizabeth Akers Allen.)

Downward, come downward, O Cost in your flight,
Soaring like Paulhan or W. Wright!
Prices, come down from the limitless sky,
Down to the reach of the Ultimate Guy.
Once you were not quite so far from the ground;
Once we had lamb chops at 10c. a pound.
Give us the days ere the cost took a leap,
When things were cheap, mother, when they were cheap.

Backward, flow backward, O Living's Advance,
Back from the purlieus of Airy Romance!
Back to the days when a porterhouse steak
Didn't cost half of what people could make!
Back to the days when a regular egg
Didn't drive people to borrow and beg!
Oh, for the days when the hog and the sheep
Were not as diamonds — when they were cheap.

Speaking of Hunting

When a button rolls under the bureau
The search is a woeful affair;
And the humorous weekly describes it but meekly
In saying the hunter will swear.
But what is that limited anger?
The impotent rage of a cub!
I only grow what you could really call hot
When the soap slips under the tub.

I've sought through a time-table's mazes,
And sworn at the men who devise
That scare and delusion of hopeless confusion,
That intricate bundle of lies.
But never a hunt that was harder,
Be you or professor or dub,
Than that ill-fated jest — I refer to the quest —
When the soap falls back of the tub

My paste pot escapes almost daily;
My scissors I never can find;
And I am the rotter who loses a blotter
More often than if he were blind.

But sooner a myriad searches
Than go to the worry and troub.
That one little cake saponaceous can make
When the soap slips under the tub —
Blank! Blank!
When the soap slips under the tub.

The Flat-Hunter's Way

We don't get any too much light;
It's pretty noisy, too, at that;
The folks next door stay up all night;
There's but one closet in the flat;
The rent we pay is far from low;
Our flat is small and in the rear;
But we have looked around, and so
We think we'll stay another year.

Our dining-room is pretty dark;
Our kitchen's hot and very small;
The "view" we get of Central Park
We really do not get at all.
The ceiling cracks and crumbles down
Upon me while I'm working here —
But, after combing all the town,
We think we'll stay another year.

We are not "handy" to the sub;
Our hall-boy service is a joke;
Our janitor's a foreign dub
Who never does a thing but smoke
Our landlord says he will not cut
A cent from rent already dear;
And so we sought for better — but
We think we'll stay another year.

Birds and Bards

When Milton sang "O nightingale
That on yon gloomy spray,"
The sonneteer whom we revere
Lauded that birdie's lay.

While Keats's ode upon that bird
Was limpid as the notes
That, sweet and strong, were in the song
Of Philomelian throats.

And Bryant's "To a Water-fowl!"
Had praise in every line,
And every word about the bird
Impinged on the divine.

When Wordsworth did the skylark stuff,
He praised the bird a few,
And Shelley's ode sincerely showed
He liked the skylark, too.

O Poets, if ye had but dwelt
Upon a Harlem block,
Fain would I read your poems sweet
Upon the sparrows' "Peet! Peet! Peet!"

The sparrows that have built their nest
Ten feet from where one takes one's rest,
And 'gin their merry, blithesome song
Each morning — quenchless, clear and strong
  Promptly at four o'clock.

A Wish

(An Apartmental Ditty.)

Mine be a flat beside the Hill;
  A vendor's cry shall soothe my ear·
A landlord shall present his bill
  At least a dozen times a year.

The tenor, oft, below my flat,
  Shall practise "Violets" and such;
And in the area a cat
  Shall beat the band, the cars, and Dutch.

Around the neighbourhood shall be
  About a hundred thousand kids;
And, eke in that vicinitee,
  Ten pianolas without lids.

And mornings, I suppose, by gosh,
  I'll be awakened prompt at seven,
By ladies hanging up the wash
  Only a mile or so from heaven.

The Monument of Q. H. F.

AD MELPOMENEN

Horace: Book III, Ode 30.

"Exegi monumentum aere perennius.
Regalique situ pyramidum altius."

Look you, the monument I have erected
High as the pyramids, royal, sublime,
During as brass — it shall not be affected
E'en by the elements coupled with Time.

Part of me, most of me never shall perish;
I shall be free from Oblivion's curse;
Mine is a name that the future will cherish—
I shall be known by my excellent verse.

I shall be famous all over this nation
Centuries after myself shall have died;
People will point to my versification —
I, who was born on the Lower East Side!

Come, then, Melpomene, why not admit me?
I want a wreath that is Delphic and green,
Seven, I think, is the size that will fit me —
Slip me some laurel to wear on my bean.

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